

## Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, SOPN

SUBJECT: JANUARY 23 PRESS ROUNDUP

LONDON FOR AMB/EX

1. DREW MIDDLETON, WRITING IN JAN. 22 NEW YORK TIMES, SAID  
REP. CHARLES H. WILSON OF CALIFORNIA HAD ASSERTED THAT  
DRAFT SALT TREATY, IN ITS PRESENT FORM, IS NOT IN BEST  
INTEREST OF U.S., AND THAT NO TREATY WOULD BE PREFERABLE  
TO ONE THAT "WOULD GUARANTEE SOVIET STRATEGIC SUPERIORITY  
FOR REMAINDER OF CENTURY." WILSON, A SENIOR MEMBER OF  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, MADE PUBLIC HIS REPORT TO  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SESSIONS OF SALT NEGOTIATIONS WHICH TOOK  
PLACE DEC. 4-8. MIDDLETON SAID WILSON'S REPORT "IS  
EXPECTED TO FUEL DEBATE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE POLICY."  
WILSON, MIDDLETON SAID, CITED "AN ALMOST TOTAL LACK OF  
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VERIFIABILITY OF COMPLIANCE" AS ONE OF MOST TROUBLING  
FEATURES OF TREATY AS NOW FRAMED. WILSON SAID PROJECTED  
TREATY IS TO USSR'S "GREAT ADVANTAGE." HE STRESSED THESE  
AREAS: 1. IT WOULD FREEZE U.S. TECHNOLOGY WHILE PERMIT-  
TING USSR TO GO AHEAD. SALT ONE, HE SAID, PERMITTED USSR  
TO PULL EVEN. 2. IT WOULD "UNDERCUT CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT  
FOR DEFENSE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT."

3. IT WOULD RESULT IN FAVORABLE WORLD PROPAGANDA FOR USSR.  
4. TREATMENT OF TRANSFER OF CRUISE MISSILE TECHNOLOGY IN TREATY, AS IT STANDS, COULD DRIVE WEDGE BETWEEN U.S. AND ITS NATO ALLIES.

2. DEFENSE/SPACE BUSINESS DAILY REPORTED JAN. 19 THAT SENATOR JOHN TOWER, WHO HAS BEEN APPOINTED A CONGRESSIONAL OBSERVER TO SALT TWO NEGOTIATIONS, HAS TOLD SECRETARY VANCE THAT BACKFIRE BOMBER IS STRATEGIC THREAT TO U.S. AND MUST BE INCLUDED IN ANY SALT TWO AGREEMENT OR AGREEMENT WILL BE ENDANGERED. TOWER, IN LETTER TO VANCE, WAS CRITICAL OF REPORTS THAT ADMINISTRATION WILL SEEK TO OBTAIN LETTER OF ASSURANCE FROM BREZHNEV THAT BACKFIRE WILL NOT BE USED AS STRATEGIC WEAPON. TOWER SAID "PROMISE OUTSIDE TREATY RAISES QUESTIONS AS TO ENFORCEABILITY OF THAT PROMISE AND MIGHT CAST DOUBTS ON INTEGRITY OF FORMAL AGREEMENT ITSELF." DEFENSE/SPACE SAID "DEFENSE AUTHORITIES POINT OUT THAT SOVIET UNION SHOWED NO RESPECT FOR UNILATERAL UNDERSTANDINGS WHICH NIXON ADMINISTRATION ATTACHED TO SALT ONE INTERIM AGREEMENT OF 1972, AND SOVIETS COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO IMPROVE THEIR POSITION ON ANY SUCH UNDERSTANDINGS ATTACHED TO SALT TWO AGREEMENT...THEY STRESS THAT ONLY AN INCLUSION OF BACKFIRE IN STRATEGIC CEILINGS, REDUCTION OF OTHER SOVIET BOMBERS AS BACKFIRE IS PRODUCED, OR LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF TANKER AIRCRAFT THAT COULD BE USED TO REFUEL BACKFIRE, WOULD BE AN ACCEPTABLE COURSE OF ACTION." UNCLASSIFIED

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TOWER, IN LETTER TO VANCE, SAID "I THINK ULTIMATE RESOLUTION OF BACKFIRE ISSUE WILL BE ONE OF SEVERAL KEY INDICATORS AS TO HOW STRONG NEGOTIATING POSITION U.S. DELEGATION WAS ABLE TO MAINTAIN." TOWER SAID HE WOULD ATTEND SALT NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA JAN. 26-27, AND AT FOLLOWING ANNUAL NATO CONFERENCE, WEHRKUNDE, IN MUNICH, WILL "SPECIFICALLY DISCUSS CERTAIN CRITICAL SALT ISSUES WITH ALLIES REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDING WEHRKUNDE."

3. JOSEPH ALBRIGHT, IN SPECIAL TO WASHINGTON STAR, REPORTED THAT PENTAGON, LARGELY TO SAVE MONEY, PLANS TO RETAIN INTO MID-1980S AT LEAST 10,000 NUCLEAR WEAPONS WHICH LACK MODERN SAFETY DEVICES TO PREVENT THEM FROM BEING BLOWN UP BY TERRORISTS OR DESTROYED BY ACCIDENT. THESE OBSOLETE WARHEADS, HE SAID, RANGE FROM ARMY "MINI-NUKES" TO MULTI-MEGATON AIR FORCE HYDROGEN BOMBS. THESE WARHEADS ARE STORED IN MILITARY WEAPONS COMPOUNDS SUCH AS TWO STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND WEAPONS SITES THAT ALBRIGHT SAID HE PENETRATED LAST MONTH BY POSING AS FENCING CONTRACTOR. HE SAID PENTAGON AUTHORITIES CONCEDE THAT FOUR METAL CYLINDERS THAT WERE HIGHLY VISIBLE ON THAT INCOGNITO VISIT TO SAC WEAPONS SITES WERE HYDROGEN BOMBS,

APPARENTLY OF 1950S VINTAGE, WHICH DID NOT HAVE UP-TO-  
DATE ELECTRONIC SAFETY DEVICES TO PREVENT UNAUTHORIZED  
EXPLOSIONS. HE SAID DELAYS IN PHASING OUT AIR FORCE  
WEAPONS ARE MATCHED BY "SLOW-MOTION ACTIONS TO REPLACE  
SEVERAL THOUSAND 20-YEAR-OLD ARMY NUCLEAR WARHEADS  
ASSIGNED TO NATO ARTILLERY UNITS IN EUROPE." HE ESTIMATED  
THAT IT WOULD COST PERHAPS AS MUCH AS FIVE BILLION DOLLARS  
OVER NEXT FEW YEARS TO REPLACE OLD WARHEADS THAT LACK  
MODERN SAFETY EQUIPMENT. VANCE

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